information furnished by the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), they have not taken any decision to reduce number of seats for students.

(c) The primary responsibility for providing adequate facilities and infrastructure in the engineering colleges is with the institutes themselves that are verified by the AICTE as per its norms and standards during its visits conducted by the Expert Committees. However, AICTE operates various schemes. viz., Modernisation and Removal of Obsolescence, Thrust Area Programmes in Technical Education, Research & Development, Schemes to improve quality of technical teachers, etc. under which financial support is provided to institutions.

Improvement in Technical Education

†1126. SHRI KRIPAL PARMAR: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is a need to effect large scale improvement in the technical education sector;

(b) if so, whether Government have chalked out any draft plan for effecting such reforms; and

(c) if so, what are the details of the above plan and what decision has been taken by Government for seeking co-operation of the private sector in implementation of the said plan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT [DR. (SHRIMATI) RITA VERMA]: (a) to (c) Improvement in technical education in the country is a continuous process and this is achieved through the implementation of the National Policy on Education (NPE) and the Programme of Action (PoA). It includes coordinated and planned development of technical education as embodied in the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) Act, 1987. For the improvement and development of technical education, AICTE operates several schemes such as Modernization and Removal of Obsolescene. Thrust Area Programme in Technical Education, Research and Development Programme. Entrepreneurship and Management Development Programme, Early Faculty Induction Programme. Quality Improvement Programme, Accreditation of courses etc. Apart from the initiatives on the part of the AICTE, recent initiatives taken to improve and strengthen technical education system include strengthening and

†Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi

consolidation of infrastructural facilities in Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs), Indian Institute of Science (IISc) and other similar institutions, development of technologies in emerging areas and their transfer to user agencies through technology development missions; transfer of techno-economic advances in technical education and appropriate technologies to rural people through expansion of Community Polytechnics; Scheme for upgrading existing polytechnics to integrate the physically disabled in the main stream of technical and vocational education; modernization of institutions and development of R&D base; Technician Education Project; modernization of libraries and switch over to electronic libraries with interconnectivity etc. Regional Engineering Colleges are being upgraded as National Institutes of Technology (NITs). With a view to providing necessary direction to the technical education system in the country towards promotion of Postgraduate Education and Research in Engineering and Technology, in December 2001, the Ministry has announced a Policy Framework, which provides for increasing the duration of M.Tech. Programmes from 18 to 24 months; raising the scholarship amount etc. private Sector is involved substantially in running of technical institutes, some of which are of very good quality, under the overall supervision of AICTE.

Central Assistance for Science Education in A.P.

1127. DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Central assistance to Andhra Pradesh for improvement of science education in schools of the State, has not been sanctioned since the financial year 2000-2001, onwards;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the remedial measures Government propose to take in this regard, so that science education in the State does not lose?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT [DR. (SHRIMATI) RITA VERMA]: (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) No central assistance for improvement of science education in schools has been sanctioned to Andhra Pradesh since 2000-2001, as an amount of Rs. 536.72 lakhs is lying as unspent balance with the state Govt.

†Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.